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ABSTRACT

A study examined secondary school teacher views concerning a number of related issues concerning communication certification and education. Three research questions were framed: (1) Are the current Idaho certification guidelines for Communication Arts sufficient? (2) Is instruction of communication arts at the junior and senior high school level sufficient for the needs of students in Idaho? and (3) Should curriculum needs be addressed by Idaho institutions of higher learning in an effort to help the communication arts teacher? A survey was sent out to secondary school teachers consisting of three groups of questions written in an affirmation mode using the Likert scale response format. A total of 72 secondary school teachers from 61 schools responded. Results showed that the number of non-certified teachers is low in speech and drama; that the needs of students in speech are being met in large degree; and that most respondents only have a B.A. or B.S. Based on these results, a number of recommendations were formulated. First, certification standards, especially in drama, debate, and forensic activity, need to be reanalyzed and/or developed. Second, universities need to help communication arts teachers acquire course work towards multiple certifications. Third, individual schools must address the needs of individual students in drama, debate, and forensic activity. Fourth, further study on small school needs should be undertaken. (Survey is attached.) (TB)

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ED 395 348

IDAHO COMMUNICATION ARTS: A REVIEW
FOR THE EDUCATOR

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This report prepared for: general distribution to Idaho educators.

Date: May 1996

ABSTRACT

The following review analyzes survey results involving Junior and Senior High School teachers of Communication Arts from the state of Idaho. Data is noted from 72 respondents from secondary schools throughout Idaho. The issues of teacher certification, teacher preparation, and related course work is discussed. A number of recommendations specific to Communication Arts are made.

Biography of Author:

Dr. Waller is a professor in the Department of Speech Communication at Northwest Nazarene College. Dennis served as Forensics Director and Debate Coach at NNC from 1982-1986 and 1990-present. Dennis served as Forensics Director and Debate Coach at Seattle Pacific University from 1986-1990. A former Nampa High School debater, Dennis continues support communication arts activities.

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IDAHO COMMUNICATION ARTS: A REVIEW FOR THE EDUCATOR

INTRODUCTION

Criticism of education on a national or state level is hardly a new theme. Concerns in light of national movements, for example, the National Education Goals Report (National Education Goals Panel, 1991) in which six national education goals set for the year 2000 are addressed. The teaching of Communication Arts in many states, including Idaho, has received some criticism in recent years due to questions of teacher preparation, student interest and student abilities upon graduation from an institution of higher learning (DeWitt, et.al., 1991). Therefore, educational debate emerges as "reforms in teacher preparation and certification have the potential to affect in profound ways every academic discipline typically represented in America's secondary schools. Speech communication is no exception" (Most, 1994, 196).

In an effort to begin to analyze these issues in Idaho, three primary questions were noted:

Question #1: Are current Idaho certification guidelines for Communication Arts sufficient?

Question #2: Is instruction of Communication Arts at the Junior or Senior High School sufficient for the needs of students in Idaho?

Question #3: Should curriculum needs be addressed by Idaho institutions of higher learning in an effort to help the Communication Arts teacher?

In order to answer these three primary questions, a study was proposed and a survey, "Idaho Communication Arts," (Appendix A) was developed through the support of an institutional grant from Northwest Nazarene College. This review serves to provide the educator with information about the findings from this survey. (Appendix B lists survey "Results by Question," for those wanting statistical data.)

METHOD

Participants:

A total of 72 people responded to the survey, representing 61 schools (36% return rate based on at least one response per school) of all 170 Junior and Senior High Schools contacted throughout the state of Idaho. The principal and the chairperson of the Communication Arts Department at each school were selected as contact persons and sent an explanatory letter and survey copy with cover letter for distribution to each teacher of Communication Arts (Speech, Debate, Drama, Forensic Activity) in their school. Time for survey response was limited to January 15, 1996 to February 15, 1996.

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Of this respondent group of 72, the length of time employed in Communication Arts was an average of 11.8 years (Question I.#4), with an average of 13.2 years (Question I.#5) employed in education generally. Women respondents 45 (63%) outnumbered men respondents 26 (36%) by a 2 to 1 margin (Question I.#10).

Survey Design:

The teacher of Communication Arts may teach a variety of subjects, but the survey was designed to focus on four areas: Speech, Debate, Drama, and Forensic Activity. Idaho currently (Fox, 1995) certifies teachers in Speech (Speech with 20 semester credit hours; or English plus 12 semester credit hours of Speech) and Speech/Drama (both fields, at least 6 semester credit hours in each). No certificate is required to teach Debate, although it is listed as a course in the Speech certificate area. Additionally, no certificate is required to teach/coach Forensic Activity, which is usually extra-curricular in nature, i.e., drama play, debate and/or speech team.

The survey was partitioned into four parts, including: background information questions (Questions I.#1-#10), certification questions (Questions II.#1-#16), comments (Question III.#1-#3) intended for further discussion on seminars/workshops specific to Communication Arts, and additional comments (Question IV) used to address general elaboration on any question.

The certification questions (Questions II.#1-#16) were written in an affirmation mode using a Likert Scale response format, strongly agree - strongly disagree. In order to interpret the data more effectively the strongly agree and agree responses were collapsed into one category of "agree," with the same being done for strongly disagree and disagree responses being collapsed to form the category of "disagree." A "neutral" response category was not placed on the survey; however, no response on a question was interpreted to mean "no response" or neutral on that question and is indicated as "NR" in the results of the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question #1: Are current Idaho certification guidelines for Communication Arts sufficient? Three issues from the survey become important in answering this primary question.

1) For areas of teaching (Question I.#8): Speech 62 (86%) was taught the most, followed by Drama 42 (58%), English 31 (43%), Debate 14 (19%), and Forensic Activity 12 (17%).

2) For areas of certification (Question I.#9): Speech 64 (89%) had the most certified respondents although those teaching Speech without a certificate 6 (8%) were noted, followed by Drama 46 (64%) with 2 (3%) not certified in Drama, English 37 (51%), Debate 22 (31%), and Forensic Activity 15 (22%).

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3) Asked to respond using a Likert Scale (Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree) on the issue of certification being sufficient in each area, i.e., "Idaho Endorsement for [specific area] are sufficient for teaching in this area" (Questions II.#1-#4).

- a. Speech (Q1): Agree 62 (86%), Disagree 9 (13%), NR 1 (1%).
- b. Debate (Q2): Agree 34 (47%), Disagree 29 (41%), NR 9 (13%).
- c. Drama (Q3): Agree 44 (61%), Disagree 21 (29%), NR 7 (10%).
- d. Forensic Activity (Q4): Agree 38 (53%), Disagree 22 (30%), NR 12 (17%).

The respondent data suggests that the number of non-certified teachers is low in Speech (8%) and in Drama (3%), yet the fact they exist is quite disturbing and suggests a need for educators certified in these areas. Interestingly, a high number of respondents (86%) agree with the statement that certification is sufficient in Speech. However, perhaps more significant is that a high level of disagreement with this statement exists for Debate (41%), Drama (29%), and Forensic Activity (30%) suggesting that work is needed in these areas, i.e., higher standards for certification in these three areas of Communication Arts.

Of interest is that most respondents 68 (94%), hold multiple certifications. The most frequently noted additional certification was in the area of English 37 (51%), of which 34 were certified in Speech, and 23 certified in Drama. Multiple certification would seem to be important for the field of Communication Arts and supports the idea that many teachers of Communication Arts are certified to teach in other areas like English. Therefore, preparation for multiple certifications may become even more critical as jobs and interests become more varied.

Question #2: Is instruction of Communication Arts at the Junior or Senior High School sufficient for the needs of students in Idaho? Two issues from the survey become important in answering this primary question.

1) Asked to respond using a Likert Scale (Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree) on the issue of instruction for students being sufficient in each area, i.e., "The needs of students in the area of [specific area] are being met in Idaho" (Questions II.#9-#12).

- a. Speech (Q9): Agree 55 (76%), Disagree 14 (20%), NR 3 (4%).
- b. Debate (Q10): Agree 37 (51%), Disagree 24 (34%), NR 11 (15%).
- c. Drama (Q11): Agree 44 (61%), Disagree 23 (32%), NR 5 (7%).
- d. Forensic Activity (Q12): Agree 32 (44%), Disagree 28 (39%), NR 12 (17%).

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2) Asked to respond using a Likert Scale (Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree) on the issue of instruction for students being sufficient in each area, i.e., "The needs of students in the area of [specific area] are being met in my school" (Questions II.#13-#16).

a. Speech (Q13): Agree 63 (87%), Disagree 7 (9%), NR 2 (3%).

b. Debate (Q14): Agree 20 (28%), Disagree 45 (63%), NR 7 (10%).

c. Drama (Q15): Agree 50 (70%), Disagree 20 (28%), NR 2 (3%).

d. Forensic Activity (Q16): Agree 19 (26%), Disagree 47 (66%), NR 6 (8%).

The respondent data suggest that the needs of students in Speech are sufficiently being met (76%) in Idaho and (87%) in the individual school. However, of greater concern is that of disagreement in the other three areas for both Idaho and the individual school in Debate (34% and 63%), Drama (32% and 28%), and Forensic Activity (39% and 66%) respectively. Certainly, the highest concern appears to be for the student needs not being met in the individual school, which may be a small school phenomena and warrants further research.

Question #3: Should curriculum needs be addressed by Idaho institutions of higher learning in an effort to help the Communication Arts teacher? Three issues from the survey become important in answering this primary question.

1) For Degrees Held (Question I.#6): only the most recent degree earned is noted. A BA/BS was held by 51 (71%) of the respondents while an MA/MS/M.ED was held by 20 (28%) of the respondents. A number of respondents did note multiple credits earned beyond their current degree.

2) For Degrees Granted by State and School (Question I.#7): only the most recent degree earned is noted. Nearly half of all respondents had received their education outside of Idaho 35 (49%) compared to those in Idaho 31 (43%).

3) Asked to respond using a Likert Scale (Strongly Agree - Strongly Disagree) on the issue of curriculum needs and institutions of higher learning, i.e., "The needs of teachers in the area of [specific area] are being met by colleges and universities in Idaho" (Questions II.#5-#8).

a. Speech (Q5): Agree 39 (54%), Disagree 27 (38%), NR 6 (8%).

b. Debate (Q6): Agree 17 (24%), Disagree 37 (51%), NR 18 (25%).

c. Drama (Q7): Agree 34 (47%), Disagree 26 (37%), NR 12 (17%).

d. Forensic Activity (Q8): Agree 26 (36%), Disagree 29 (40%), NR 17 (24%).

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The respondent data suggest that the majority of respondents only have a BA/BS (71%), indicating a need for possible graduate work or workshops. Of greater concern is that most degrees have been earned from institutions out (49%) of Idaho compared to institutions in (43%) Idaho. Stronger feelings appear to be represented in all four areas with significant disagreement that colleges and universities in Idaho are meeting the needs of teachers in Speech (38%), Debate (51%), Drama (37%) and Forensic Activity (40%). Clearly, institutions of higher learning need to work on methods for helping Communication Arts teachers who are teaching in the field and in attracting new/future teachers to earn their degrees from an institution in Idaho.

Respondent comments (Question III.#1-#3 and Question IV) were mixed, but a number of themes did emerge. (Respondent comments are not included in this review, only "themes" are noted.)

Asked to respond "concerning Question II.#1-#16: what changes would you make" (Question III.#1) a total of 36 (50%) of respondents replied. Three themes emerged: 1) area workshops in speech, debate, drama were suggested by 13 (18%) of respondents, 2) a methods course in subject area teaching should be required suggested by 4 (6%) of respondents, and 3) requirements for speech arts certification should be increased suggested by 3 (4%) of respondents.

Asked to respond to "what courses in speech communication would you like to see offered" (Question III.#2) a total of 56 (78%) of respondents replied. The following areas were noted by respondents: Debate 20 (28%) received the most comment, followed by Drama 18 (25%), and Speech 13 (18%). Additionally, other communication arts components received comment from respondents: Interpersonal & Nonverbal Communication 7 (10%), Technology & Communication 4 (6%), and Group Dynamics 3 (4%).

Asked to respond to "what course would you feel qualified to teach/assist" (Question III.#3) a total of 30 (42%) of respondents replied. Speech was suggested by 14 (19%) of respondents, followed by Drama 9 (13%), and Interpersonal 5 (7%).

Various comments were given in Question IV specific towards the individual School District, entire State, and all Colleges. A total of 17 (24%) of respondents gave specific comments in these areas of which 12 (17%) of respondent comments could be used.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In final analysis, it should be noted that generalizing to all Idaho teachers of Communication Arts based on 72 responses is tenuous at best. However, some ideas do seem to be clearly emphasized by this respondent group that do provide an indicator of significant issues and the need for further analysis.

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In response to the three primary questions addressed in the beginning of this review, a number of recommendations emerge.

Question #1: Are current Idaho certification guidelines for Communication Arts sufficient?

Recommendation #1: Certification standards, especially in Drama, Debate, and Forensic Activity need to be reanalyzed and/or developed. Analysis for future changes should begin now between all involved parties from educators to Idaho Department of Education personnel.

Recommendation #2: Institutions of higher learning need to help Communication Arts teachers acquire course work (classes, seminars, workshops) towards multiple certifications with special concentration on providing means for acquiring course work.

Question #2: Is instruction of Communication Arts at the Junior or Senior High School sufficient for the needs of students in Idaho?

Recommendation #3: The needs of students in Communication Arts need to be addressed by the individual schools especially in Drama, Debate, and Forensic Activity. Special emphasis must be placed on addressing the needs of students in small/rural schools.

Recommendation #4: Further study on small schools needs, as applied to Communication Arts, should be undertaken. Special emphasis should be placed on respondent identified needs in Drama and Forensic Activity.

Question #3: Should curriculum needs be addressed by Idaho institutions of higher learning in an effort to help the Communication Arts teacher?

Recommendation #5: Idaho institutions of higher learning need to more effectively meet the needs of Communication Arts teachers in current curricula. Special emphasis must be placed on providing needed course work to attract and keep teachers in Idaho to receive first (B.A.) and subsequent (advanced) degrees.

Finally, as a researcher, it is my hope that each educator reading this review will analyze these recommendations for what he/she can do. At the very least, ask questions. More importantly, consider leading a panel for a state conference (Recommendation #1), suggest courses to be taught by your local college/university (Recommendations #2 and #5), and suggest ways to respond to student needs (Recommendations #3 and #4).

REFERENCES

National Education Goals Panel. (1991). The National Education Goals Report: Building A Nation of Learners. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Fox, A.C. (July 1, 1995) Revised. Idaho Department of Education Professional School Personnel Certification Standards. Boise: Idaho Department of Education.

Most, M.G. (July 1994). Certification standards for speech communication teachers: A nationwide survey. Communication Education, 43, 195-204.

DeWitt, J., Bozik, M., Hay, E., Litterst, J., Strohkirch, C.S., & Yocum, K. (April 1991). Oral communication competency and teacher certification in the U.S.: Reality and recommendations. Communication Education, 40, 144-151.

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to each of the following questions as directed. Your honest responses are appreciated! (Your name and address will not be released in the survey summary.)

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Name: _____
2. School/City: _____
3. Mailing Address: _____

4. Length of time employed in Communication Arts: _____ yrs
5. Length of time employed as an educator: _____ yrs
6. Degree Held:
☐ BA
☐ MA/MS
☐ PH.D/ED.D
☐ Other (list): _____
7. Degree(s) granted from(school/state): _____
8. Area of Teaching: (please identify all that apply).
☐ Speech
☐ Debate
☐ Drama
☐ Forensic Activity
☐ Other (list): _____
9. Area of Certification: (please identify all that apply).
☐ Speech
☐ Debate
☐ Drama
☐ Forensic Activity
☐ Other (list): _____
10. Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female

II. QUESTIONS (please circle your response)

Idaho State Endorsement for Speech/Communication requires 20 semester credit hours in speech teaching methods and four subject fields: interpersonal, public speaking, nonverbal, group, argumentation/persuasion, and drama/theatre; or English endorsement plus 12 semester credit hours in speech teaching methods, public speaking, and interpersonal. (1995, Idaho Certification Standards)

Idaho State Endorsement for Speech/Drama requires credits spread over both fields with not less than six semester credit hours in each. (1995, Idaho Certification Standards)

DIRECTIONS: For the following, use the number statements designation described in the key. Circle the appropriate number, only one per item.

KEY: 4 = strongly agree 2 = disagree
3 = agree 1 = strongly disagree

- 4 3 2 1 1. Idaho Endorsements for Speech/Communication are sufficient for teaching in this area.
- 4 3 2 1 2. Idaho Endorsements for Debate are sufficient for teaching in this area.
- 4 3 2 1 3. Idaho Endorsements for Drama are sufficient for teaching in this area.
- 4 3 2 1 4. Idaho Endorsements for Forensic Activity are sufficient for teaching in this area.
- 4 3 2 1 5. The needs of teachers in the area of Speech/Communication are being met by colleges and universities in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 6. The needs of teachers in the area of Debate are being met by colleges and universities in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 7. The needs of teachers in the area of Drama are being met by colleges and universities in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 8. The needs of teachers in the area of Forensic Activity are being met by colleges and universities in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 9. The needs of students in the area of Speech/Communication are being met in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 10. The needs of students in the area of Debate are being met in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 11. The needs of students in the area of Drama are being met in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 12. The needs of students in the area of Forensic Activity are being met in Idaho.
- 4 3 2 1 13. The needs of students in the area of Speech/Communication are being met in my school.
- 4 3 2 1 14. The needs of students in the area of Debate are being met in my school.

- 4 3 2 1 15. The needs of students in the area of Drama
are being met in my school.
- 4 3 2 1 16. The needs of students in the area of Forensic
Activity are being met in my school.

III. COMMENTS:

1. Concerning questions II:1-16, what changes (add/delete) would you make? (Please be specific. Add additional pages for comment as needed.)

2. What courses/seminars/workshops in the speech communication field would you like to see offered in your area? (Please list specifics.)

3. What courses/seminars/workshops in the speech communication field would you feel qualified to teach/assist?

- IV. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: please feel free to elaborate on any question asked. Add additional pages for comment as needed.

RETURN SURVEY BY: February 15, 1996

RETURN SURVEY TO: Dr. Dennis R. Waller
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IDAHO COMMUNICATION ARTS: A REVIEW
RESULTS BY QUESTION

Population: ns = 170 schools contacted by two sources each;
n = 61 schools returned (1-3 respondents) = 36%;
N = 72 people returned survey = 42%.

QUESTION I.#1-#3: Confidential Responses (not included in this review).

QUESTION I.#4: RESULTS - TIME EMPLOYED IN COMMUNICATION ARTS

N = 72 respondents.

RANGE: 0-35 years
AVERAGE: (849) = 11.8 years

QUESTION I.#5: RESULTS - TIME EMPLOYED IN EDUCATION

N = 72 respondents.

RANGE: 1-35 years
AVERAGE: (951) = 13.2 years

QUESTION I.#6: RESULTS - DEGREE HELD (Note: most recent degree recorded.)

N = 72 respondents.

	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
BA/BS:	51	71%
MA/MS/M.Ed:	20	28%
PH.D/ED.D:	0	0%
Other (list):	0	0%
NR (no response):	1	1%

QUESTION I.#7: RESULTS - DEGREE GRANTED BY SCHOOL & STATE

N = 72 respondents. *Note: most recent earned degree is recorded.

INSTITUTION	TOTAL/PERCENTAGE	SUB-TOTAL/PERCENTAGE	SUB-TOTAL/PERCENTAGE
Schools <u>in</u> Idaho:	31 / 43%		
ACI: Albertsons Col.		2 /	3%
BSU: Boise State Univ.		9 /	13%
ISU: Idaho State Univ.		14 /	19%
LCSC: Lewis/Clark Col.		1 /	1%
NNC: NW Nazarene Col.		0 /	0%
UofI: Univ. of Idaho		5 /	7%
Schools <u>out of</u> Idaho:	35 / 49%		
UT		15 /	21%
MT		4 /	6%
WA		3 /	4%
CO		2 /	3%
SD		2 /	3%
Other (AR, AZ, CA, IL, KS MO, OH, PA, TX)		9 /	13%
NR (no response):	6 /		8%

QUESTION I.#8: RESULTS - AREA OF TEACHING

N = 72 respondents. (Note: multiple responses may be given.)

ACTIVITY		TOTAL / PERCENTAGE	SUB-TOTAL /	SUB-PERCENTAGE
Speech	(Sp):	62 / 86%		
*Speech only:			6 /	8%
Debate	(De)	14 / 19%		
Drama	(Dr)	42 / 58%		
*Drama only:			2 /	3%
Forensic Activity	(FA)	12 / 17%		
Other (list activity)		59 / 82%		
-AD = Academic Decathlon:			1 /	1%
-Art = Art Educ.			1 /	1%
-Bus = Business Educ.			1 /	1%
-Com = Interpersonal, Media			3 /	4%
-Eng = English			31 /	43%
-FL = Foreign Language			3 /	4%
-His = History/Soc.Studies			2 /	3%
-Hum = Literature/writing			3 /	4%
-PE = Physical Educ.			2 /	3%
-Psy = Psychology			1 /	1%
-Pub = Publications			3 /	4%
-Rea = Reading			8 /	11%

QUESTION I.#9: RESULTS - AREA OF CERTIFICATION

N = 72 respondents. (Note: multiple responses may be given.)

ACTIVITY		TOTAL / PERCENTAGE	SUB-TOTAL /	SUB-PERCENTAGE
Speech	(Sp):	64 / 89%		
-Speech only:			3 /	4%
-No Sp certification:			7 /	10%
-No Sp cert, but tching Sp:			6 /	8%
Debate	(De)	22 / 31%		
Drama	(Dr)	46 / 64%		
-Dr cert. only, no Sp:			1 /	1%
-No Dr cert, but tching Dr:			2 /	3%
Forensic Activity	(FA)	15 / 21%		
Other (list activity)		78 / 108%		
-Art = Art Educ.			1 /	1%
-Bus = Business Educ.			1 /	1%
-Com = Interpersonal, Media			3 /	4%
-Eng = English (Of 37: 34 cert. in Speech, 23 in Drama)			37 /	51%
-FL = Foreign Language			5 /	7%
-His = History/Soc.Studies			8 /	11%
-HEC = Home Economics			1 /	1%
-Hum = Literature/writing			4 /	6%
-Mus = Music			1 /	1%
-PE = Physical Educ.			4 /	6%
-Psy = Psychology			1 /	1%
-Rea = Reading			11 /	15%
-Sci = Sciences			1 /	1%

QUESTION I.#10: RESULTS - GENDER

N = 72 respondents.

GENDER	TOTAL	/	PERCENTAGE
Male:	26	/	36%
Female:	45	/	63%
NR (no response):	1	/	1%

QUESTION II.#1-#16: RESULTS - QUESTIONS 1-16 (Concerning certification issues.)

N = 72 respondents

DESIGNATION/KEY: SA4 = strongly agree D2 = disagree
 A3 = agree SD1 = strongly disagree
 NR = no response

TOTAL/AVERAGE PERCENTAGE (%) -- Per Question

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
SA4	21/29	6/8	10/14	7/10	6/8	2/3	6/8	3/4	11/15	3/4	8/11	3/4	26/36	8/11	23/32	3/4
A3	41/57	28/39	34/47	31/43	33/46	15/21	28/39	23/32	44/61	34/47	36/50	29/40	37/51	12/17	27/38	16/22
D2	5/7	20/28	16/22	19/26	17/24	24/33	22/31	19/26	10/14	20/28	20/28	22/31	6/8	15/21	13/18	20/28
SD1	4/6	9/13	5/7	3/4	10/14	13/18	4/6	10/14	4/6	4/6	3/4	6/8	1/1	30/42	7/10	27/38
NR	1/1	9/13	7/10	12/17	6/8	18/25	12/17	17/24	3/4	11/15	5/7	12/17	2/3	7/10	2/3	6/8

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